Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A β-lactam acylase

which is produced by a microorganism belonging to the genus *Stenotrophomonas*.

2. (Original) A β-lactam acylase

which is produced by the *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* KNK12A strain.

3. (Original) A gene

which contains a DNA coding for a protein comprising an amino acid sequence identical or substantially identical with the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2.

4. (Original) A gene

which contains a DNA coding for a protein in which the 204th methionine in the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 is substituted with valine.

5. (Original) A gene

which contains a DNA coding for a protein in which the 204th methionine in the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 is substituted.

6. (Original) A gene

which contains a DNA coding for a protein comprising an amino acid sequence in which one or a plurality of amino acids in the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 have undergone deletion, substitution or addition and having β-lactam acylase activity.

7. (Original) A gene

which contains a DNA coding for a protein in which the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 is modified after translation and having β-lactam acylase activity.

8. (Original) A gene

which contains a DNA in which the base sequence corresponding to the site coding for the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 in the base sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:1 codes for the amino acid sequence identical with the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2.

9. (Currently amended) The gene according to ~~any one of Claims 3 to 8~~ Claim 3

which is isolated from a microorganism belonging to the genus *Stenotrophomonas*.

10. (Original) A microorganism

which produces a protein comprising an amino acid sequence identical or substantially identical with the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 and belongs to the genus *Stenotrophomonas*.

11. (Original) A polynucleotide

which contains a base sequence coding for a protein comprising an amino acid sequence identical or substantially identical with the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2.

12. (Original) A polynucleotide

which contains a base sequence coding for a protein in which the 204th methionine in the amino acid

sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 is substituted with valine.

13. (Original) A polynucleotide which contains a base sequence coding for a protein in which the 204th methionine in the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 is substituted.

14. (Original) A polynucleotide which contains a base sequence coding for a protein comprising an amino acid sequence in which one or a plurality of amino acids in the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 have undergone deletion, substitution or addition and having β-lactam acylase activity.

15. (Original) A polynucleotide which contains a base sequence coding for a protein in which the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 is modified after translation and having β-lactam acylase activity.

16. (Original) A polynucleotide which contains a base sequence in which the base sequence corresponding to the site coding for the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 in the base sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:1 codes for the amino acid sequence identical with the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2.

17. (Original) A polynucleotide which contains the base sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:1.

18. (Currently amended) The polynucleotide according to ~~any one of Claims 11 to 17~~ Claim 11 which is isolated from a microorganism belonging to the genus *Stenotrophomonas*.

19. (Original) A protein which comprises an amino acid sequence identical or substantially identical with the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2.

20. (Original) A protein which comprises an amino acid sequence in which the 204th methionine in the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 is substituted with valine.

21. (Original) A protein which comprises an amino acid sequence in which the 204th methionine in the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 is substituted.

22. (Original) A protein which comprises an amino acid sequence in which one or a plurality of amino acids in the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 have undergone deletion, substitution or addition and having β-lactam acylase activity.

23. (Original) A protein in which the amino acid sequence shown under SEQ ID NO:2 is modified after translation and having β-lactam acylase activity.

24. (Currently amended) A gene which contains a transcription regulatory sequence

contained in the gene according to ~~any one of Claims 3 to 9~~ Claim 3.

25. (Currently amended) A gene

which contains a translation regulatory sequence contained in the gene according to ~~any one of Claims 3 to 9~~ Claim 3.

26. (Currently amended) The gene according to ~~any one of Claims 3 to 9~~ Claim 3 under the control of regulon containing a transcription and/or translation regulatory sequence,

wherein either or both of said regulatory sequence(s) is (are) substituted with other transcription and/or translation regulatory sequence each obtainable by the same or different living organism.

27. (Currently amended) A recombinant vector

which comprises ~~at least one of~~ the gene according to Claim 3~~, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, or 26~~.

28. (Original) A transformant

which is obtainable by transforming a host with the recombinant vector according to Claim 27.

29. (Original) The transformant according to Claim 28,

wherein the host is a gram-negative microorganism.

30. (Original) The transformant according to Claim 28,

wherein the host is a gram-positive microorganism.

31. (Original) The transformant according to Claim 28

which is pUCNTkmTn5-KNK-L/HB101 (FERM BP-8362).

32. (Original) The transformant according to Claim 28

which is pUCNTTn5-MuKNK-L1/HB101 (FERM BP-8369).

33. (Currently amended) A method of producing a β-lactam acylase

which comprises culturing the transformant according to ~~any one of Claims 28 to 32~~ Claim 28, and recovering a β-lactam acylase produced by said transformant.

34. (Currently amended) A β-lactam acylase

which comprises an amino acid sequence coded by the polynucleotide according to ~~any one of Claims 11 to 18~~ Claim 11.

35. (Currently amended) An immobilized β-lactam acylase

which is obtainable by culturing the microorganism according to Claim 10 ~~or the transformant according to any one of Claims 28 to 32~~, and immobilizing the cell, cell-mixed culture, cell disrupted product, or a β-lactam acylase extracted and/or purified from the cell.

36. (Original) A method of producing a β-lactam acylase in a transformant or of enhancing the production

which comprises preparing the recombinant vector according to Claim 27, transforming a host with said recombinant vector, cloning the obtained transformant, and selecting.

37. (Original) A method of producing a β-lactam antibiotic by using the β-lactam acylase according to Claim 34.

38. (Original) The method according to Claim 37,

wherein the β-lactam antibiotic is amoxycillin.

39. (New) An immobilized β-lactam acylase

which is obtainable by culturing the transformant according to Claim 28, and immobilizing the cell, cell-mixed culture, cell disrupted product, or a β-lactam acylase extracted and/or purified from the cell.